

REMARKS

The final Office Action mailed on September 28, 2009, has been received, and carefully considered.

The rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is again respectfully traversed.

The Examiner considers that the term "circumferential web" has no conventional meaning in the art and that it is unclear to the Examiner (i) if the circumferential web is structurally different to that of the "stimulus" which is mentioned in the prior art, and (ii) if the circumferential web must have multiple connection points that form around the periphery of the molded piece in connection with the mold blank.

It is submitted by the Applicants that the term "circumferential web" is clear to a person of ordinary skill in the art reading Applicants' specification disclosure.

To further clarify the nature of the circumferential web, Applicants have amended claim 1 by incorporating therein the limitations of claims 2 and 5. Namely, claim 1 now recites that after complete processing of the molded piece, i.e. working of both the inner and the outer contour, the circumferential web remaining in the outer boundary range and in the area of the largest extent of the molded piece is split by circular milling by way of setting a milling tool in its

depth (for support, see the description at page 5, 2nd paragraph).

In view of the above amendment and remarks, the Applicants respectfully urge favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-10 and 12-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter "APA") in view of Filser (U.S. 7,077,391, hereinafter "Filser (US'391)"). Furthermore, claim 11 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over APA in view of Filser (US'391), and further in view of Bodenmiller et al. (US 6,495,073).

The Applicants respectfully maintain that the cited prior art does not disclose or suggest Applicants' invention, as presently claimed. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is therefore respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Preliminarily, it must be noted for the record that in the previous Office Action dated March 4, 2009, claim 12 was deemed free of the prior art, which fails to teach a holding web that is a perforated membrane connection.

Inexplicably, however, the Examiner has, without explanation, now included claim 12 in the rejection under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) based on a combination of the APA and Filser references.

The Applicants respectfully request an explanation from the Examiner as to why claim 12 is now included in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on a combination of the APA and Filser references.

As to claims 1-10, 13 and 17-19, the Examiner repeated his opinion set forth in the Action dated March 4, 2009, and it remains clear that the Examiner misinterprets the state of the art.

As to amended claim 1, the claim limitations now clearly recite that the circumferential web runs in the area with the largest extent of the molded piece. Filser lacks any hint in this regard. Filser teaches only that numerous webs extend in a spaced manner from the outer surface of the molded piece.

This does not mean, however, that the webs extend in the area with the largest extent, as presently claimed. Such an interpretation of Filser is exclusively based on the knowledge of the present invention.

Furthermore, the Examiner's arguments that the teaching of the subject invention results from the state of the art, is based on the disclosure of the original application documents in view of Filser. However, the state of the art discussed in the original application documents is identical with Filser.

This clearly demonstrates that the Examiner's opinion regarding the Filser reference is erroneous, because if the state of the art discussed in the original application documents suggests the invention, there was no need to cite the Filser reference in the prior art rejections.

It is explained in the original application documents that to produce a molded piece, it is known to mill the same out of a blank with the molded piece remaining connected with the blank via sprueings. These sprueings result clearly from Fig. 10 of Filser.

In contrast, the present invention provides a circumferential web.

Furthermore, if the molded piece is totally processed inside and outside, only the circumferential web needs to be split. The finalized molded piece is available without an actual need for finishing.

According to the state of the art, relatively thick webs are to be split at different points of the molded piece. In these regions, the molded piece needs to be finished precisely. This is clearly expressed by Filser, where at column 5, lines 46-48, it reads:

"On completion of machining of the blank, the webs 20 are separated from the work-piece 18 and the point of separation of the workpiece is ground smooth."

Clearly, in the present invention, the molded piece is not connected with the blank via separated webs, but via one circumferential web, i.e. the entire circumferential surface of the molded piece in the region of its largest extent is connected to the molded piece at each single point, namely circumferential.

In addition, it cannot be understood to what extent the reference to column 5, line 56-65 of Filser offers any suggestion towards the teaching of the invention. It is expressed clearly in these lines that the forces acting on the molded piece are deflected via the several holding webs, connecting in a spaced manner the molded piece with the remaining blank into the frame 12. This requires that the remaining blank is, for example, glued with the frame.

In this regard, frame 12 has nothing in common with the circumferential web according to the invention. Rather, frame 12 is a separate component.

As to claim 12, the Examiner now argues that in knowledge of the state of the art discussed in the application and under consideration of Filser, a man skilled in the art knows that a molded piece can remain connected with a residual blank via a membrane having openings. The Examiner's reasoning for such an interpretation of the state of the art is unclear to the Applicants.

In the original application documents, it is expressed clearly that the state of art teaches the possibility of connecting a molded piece with a residual blanket via single webs, i.e. sprueings, which are to be separated after the molded piece has been processed.

There is no suggestion or teaching in Filser to indicate indirectly that the sprueings need to be relatively thick, because Fig. 5 shows that several molded pieces are interconnected by sprueings inside the residual blank, whereby the outer blanks are connected directly with the residual blank. Hence, the outer sprueings 20 have to be relatively thick to hold all molded pieces. This is known to a person skilled in the art, since it needs to be assured that during processing of the molded pieces, they do not break out of the residual blank.

The Bodenmiller et al. reference does not fill the gaps left by Filser.

Consequently, a combination of the prior art cited by the Examiner does not make obvious Applicants' invention as set forth in the claims, as amended.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are unsustainable, and urge favorable reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

It is believed that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early allowance to this effect is respectfully urged. If any final points remain that can be clarified by telephone, Examiner Abraham is encouraged to contact Applicants' attorney at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted



Date: December 28, 2009

Malcolm J. MacDonald
Reg. No. 40,250
(703) 837-9600 Ext. 24

Dennison, Schultz & MacDonald
Suite 105
1727 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314